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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, February 26, 1932.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "The Whys and Hows of Waffles." Information from Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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"Someday, Aunt Sammy, when you're in the mood, I'll have a little chat with you about waffles."

That's what the Recipe Lady said to me not long ago. When she makes a promise like that it doesn't take much to put me in the mood. In fact, I've been in a waffle mood steadily ever since. But the Recipe Lady is a busy person. Important things are going on all day long in her kitchen, so she's not given to leisure moments. You don't find her spending time in a rocking chair holding her hands. In fact, you have to be very spry to catch her even for a minute when she's not right in the midst of developing something new in the food line.

Well, as I was saying, I got into the waffle mood, but it happened to be one of the Recipe Lady's busy days. So I decided I'd just scurry around by myself and get a little background of waffle information while I waited.

For example, I wanted to learn some waffle history--facts like what, when and where the first waffle was made, what famous men ate waffles, and so forth.

"Just suppose," I said to myself, as I set forth for the library, "just suppose now that I should find out that waffles came to England with William the Conqueror. Or suppose that Pocahontas served John Smith the first waffle in history. Or suppose Columbus was eating waffles when he sighted land. Wouldn't that be news to interest my radio friends?"

You see how hopefully my mind was running on. Well, I went to the dictionary. Not a historical fact about waffles did I find. Then I tried the encyclopedia. No luck. Finally I went through history books. Waffles weren't mentioned. I was discouraged then and gave up. If you know anything about the invention of waffles or any other historical waffle fact, I wish you'd write me. Even the Recipe Lady isn't informed about the waffle in history. But she does know plenty about present-day waffles--how to make them, how to serve them, and how to vary the recipe for many different kinds. If you own a waffle iron, electric or otherwise, here's the time to perk up your ears and sharpen your pencils. For what the Recipe Lady told me, I'm

about to relay to you. And when the next Sunday night lunchtime rolls around, you'll be ready to serve any one of a dozen different kinds of waffles to your family or friends.

Sunday night, did I say? That's not half the story. Waffles are one of these versatile foods that are suitable for any meal except dinner. Yes, and there are even waffles that make an excellent dessert for dinner. Dessert waffles? My, yes. Gingerbread waffles, chocolate waffles, pecan waffles served with--

But wait. I'm getting ahead of my story. Let's go back to the beginning. The traditional waffle is a hot bread served for breakfast with butter and sugar or syrup. But waffles are also excellent for a main-course dish, or for dessert at almost any meal. They're simple to make and are particularly nice for informal entertaining, especially when men are present. And they're an inexpensive food.

Plain waffles, for example, are good for breakfast with honey, syrup, soft jelly or marmalade. They also make an excellent main dish for a meal when served with creamed food--creamed chicken, oysters, meat or fish--- or with meat in gravy. In fact, almost any mixture usually served on toast will also be good with waffles.

You can serve the dessert waffles with whipped cream, pudding sauce, soft jelly, or syrup from preserved fruit. There are lots of good possibilities. For my part, I know of few desserts as delectable as hot gingerbread waffles with whipped cream, or hot chocolate waffles with chocolate marshmallow sauce.

What's the ideal waffle like?

"Crisp, light and an even brown on both sides," says the Recipe Lady.

The plain waffles we've been talking about are made of flour, milk, eggs, baking powder, fat and salt. But you can use sour milk and soda in place of the sweet milk, if you like. Also you can vary this plain waffle by using whole wheat flour, bread crumbs, rice and so forth. During the War, the Recipe Lady says she made most delicious waffles of the corn flour in use at that time.

I asked her for some hints on successful waffle making.

"To begin with," she replied, "use a standard recipe. There's a good one in the green cookbook. But you'll find that the iron is almost more important than the recipe. The iron you use, must be hot enough to keep the batter from sticking and to make the waffle crisp, yet not so hot that it will burn the waffle. Then, the top and bottom of the iron must heat evenly. It pays to follow the directions that come with your waffle iron. Usually, they advise oiling the iron only once- the first time it's in use."

"What makes some waffles thick and some as thin as wafers?" I inquired.

"The iron, usually. And that, by the way, is a point to consider in selecting a waffle iron. Do you like your waffles thick, thin or medium? Their size will depend on the depth between the top and bottom of the iron. The chief difficulty with thick waffles is that often they're not as crisp as most people like."

"What makes waffles stick?"

"Usually the iron isn't hot enough when they're poured in. But sometimes they stick because there' isn't enough fat in the batter."

"How can you be sure to make waffles crisp?"

"The iron again. It must be hot enough to hiss when they go in. Also in my experience, Aunt Sammy, a waffle mixture made by separating the eggs and folding in the beaten whites last makes crisper waffles than one in which the whole egg is added, That reminds me. I hope you're going to give your radio friends a few hints about caring for their irons properly, since the iron is so important for successful waffles. I'd suggest to them, first, that waffle irons should never, never be washed. Some people don't know that, and then, of course, suggest that after using the iron, and while it's still warm, wipe off the grids with cloth or soft paper. Then let it stand open until it's cold. And always avoid using any utensil on it that might scratch the surface."

Now a word about making those dessert waffles. Gingerbread waffles are made with a thin gingerbread mixture. You pour the mixture from a pitcher to the center of the hot grid and bake a few minutes. The molasses in these waffles gives them a tendency to brown quickly, so watch them to be sure they don't burn. Also take care, not to break them when you remove them from the iron. Serve piping hot with whipped cream; many people also like a mixture of cream cheese dates and nuts. Spread between the hot waffles.

The plain waffle mixture is the basis for both chocolate waffles and nut waffles. Both chocolate and nut waffles are based on the plain waffle recipe. Just add some chopped nuts and extra salt for nut waffles. Pudding sauce of different sorts are good on chocolate and on nut waffles.

The menu today? Haven't you guessed? A waffle supper for Sunday night— or any other informal meal. Here it is: Plain waffles; Kidney stew; whole carrots buttered; Celery and radishes; and Fruit salad with whipped cream dressing.

If you're ready with your pencils now, I'd like to give you a fine recipe for chocolate waffles. There are nine ingredients. Nine. Here they are:

2 cups of sifted soft-wheat flour
1 and 1/2 cups of milk
1/4 cup of sugar
2 squares of unsweetened chocolate
3 tablespoons of melted fat
2 eggs
3 teaspoons of baking powder
1 teaspoon of salt, and
1/4 teaspoon of vanilla

I'll repeat that list while you check. And if I don't go slowly enough, please shout. (Repeat.)

Mix the dry ingredients. Then add the milk and egg yolks. Melt the fat and the chocolate and add it to the batter. Lastly, fold in the beaten whites of the eggs. Have the waffle iron hot enough to cook the waffles quickly. As soon as they are baked, sprinkle them with powdered sugar and serve.

Monday: Saving Day Ideas.